Bearley Parish Council

November 2026

Report by Councillor George Cowcher

Warwickshire County Councillor for the Wellesbourne Division

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1.Local Government Reorganisation We have received notification that the Secretary of State is minded to approve the proposals for two Unitary Authorities for Warwickshire, this is subject to a three week consultation period which has yet to start (no date has been confirmed). I have heard that the County Council will be asking the Secretary of State to consider new evidence about the financial stability of a Northern Unitary Council and be restating their preference for one Authority for the whole of the county. The new Authorities are planned to come into existence in May 2029 with shadow elections in May 2028. Local elections will be held for Stratford District Council in May 27 with the term of office being two years. Work in already underway in creating a new Unitary for South Warwickshire and there is a need for a watchful eye to be had over budgetary arrangements as the current administration constantly maintain that the North of the county is underfunded and more provision should be made there. Things are a little complicated by the political instability in Warwick District but the extra year is helpful in this respect. I remain on the County Council's Local Government Reorganisation Working Party.

2. Deputy Leader As Deputy Leader of my political group I am able to attend the County Group Leaders Forum and Cabinet which gives me a great insight into current issues at the County. I have also just completed a round of meetings with the main Directors to discuss context for preparing the 2027/28 budget. Key issues are continuing overspend on adult social care, the SEND deficit, potential level of Council Tax and draining the remaining reserves, the future of delegated highways budgets, children's centre funding, capital programme particularly for education, highway design capacity. Much depends on the local government financial settlement that is announced just before Christmas

3. WCC Councillor Grants I have allocated the last of my community grant to help the establishment of an 11-14 youth club in Wellesbourne. I am encouraged to see the reestablishment of youth service which were severely cut a few years ago. I believe this provides a good marker for the new Unitary Authority. I have small grant fund available for community safety projects and I would welcome any ideas the Council might have for using this.

4. Highways Current Issues

Speeding traffic through the village

5. Library Review A review has been undertaken about the operation of libraries including Stratford and Wellesbourne. The long report produced states there are no issues. I have asked for the opportunity cost of preparing this report that used significant amount of staff time be prepared to see how much this potentially cost.

George Cowcher

16 November 2026